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S E C R E T AMMAN 001264

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [AL](#) [SA](#) [EG](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: FONMIN MUASHER: ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT AVOIDS A SPLIT
ON IRAQ, BUT DOES LITTLE ELSE

REF: A. STATE 49625

[1](#)B. CAIRO 1751

[1](#)C. CAIRO 1752

Classified By: A/DCM Doug Silliman for reasons 1.5 (B) and (D)

SHARM AL-SHEIKH SUMMIT DOES LITTLE

[1](#)1. (S) Foreign Minister Marwan Muasher told Ambassador and A/DCM March 2 that he was "perplexed" by Egyptian behavior in calling for an extraordinary summit, then not injecting any new content or energy. He said the Egyptians were totally passive. The Sharm al-Sheikh Summit, he said, had the potential to "split the Arab League," but heads of state had decided not to let that happen. Syrian President Bashar al-Asad, he commented, was "playing to the Arab street and completely supported Iraq" throughout the discussions. Jordan, he said, had played "a crucial role in watering down the language of the communique."

[1](#)2. (S) Responding to the Ambassador's question about the UAE's suggestion that Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi leadership resign to prevent a war, Muasher said that the suggestion "just came out of the blue," was circulated only as a written text, and provoked no serious discussion. However, he commented that members of the Iraqi and UAE delegations exchanged heated words outside the plenary session.

DRAFT UNSCR ON IRAQ

[1](#)3. (S) The Ambassador gave Muasher a copy of the US/UK/Spanish draft UNSCR on Iraq and outlined the U.S. rationale for introducing the resolution. Muasher asked whether the U.S. planned to call for a vote on the resolution even if the U.S. determined that the draft resolution would not receive nine votes or would be vetoed. The Ambassador responded that the U.S. was hopeful that it could secure the votes necessary to pass the resolution. Muasher said his appraisal was that there were not nine votes for a new resolution.

COMMENT

[1](#)4. (S) In a conversation before the Summit last week, King Abdullah told the Ambassador that he really did not want to go to the Summit because he felt it would be divisive and nothing good was likely to come out of it. Muasher's description of the wrangling and divisions at Sharm al-Sheikh seem to confirm that the King's fears were well founded.
GNEHM